

# ANNUAL REPORT

20  
18

**FOCUS**  
ON OUR  
**CUSTOMERS**



**MECKLENBURG COUNTY**  
**Code Enforcement**

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LUESA



As Director of the Mecklenburg County Land Use & Environmental Services Agency (LUESA), I am delighted to present you Code Enforcement's annual report for Fiscal Year 2017-2018. In this report, we outline our efforts this past year as we focused on serving our customers better than ever before.

This year, part of that focus involved rising to meet a challenge, when all County systems were impacted by a cyber attack. Under the leadership of County Manager Dena Diorio, we set about the arduous task of restoring our technology systems instead of giving in to the demands of the perpetrators. While this work to restore our systems continued, Code Enforcement staff continued to provide plan review, permitting and inspection services, improvising as needed, including a paper-based service system to ensure that our customers were not greatly impacted. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with you, our customers, to build a safe and thriving Mecklenburg County.

We were also pleased to see our "Building with our Veterans" program receive national recognition. I was honored to talk about our work on the program, which trains veterans to become code officials, at a national conference about government innovation. This program is becoming a national model, which is a wonderful bonus to meeting our need for more code officials.

We hope you will enjoy reading about these and our other accomplishments last year in this annual report. We look forward to a year filled with even greater partnership and success!

Ebenezer S. Gujjarlapudi, P.E.  
Director, Mecklenburg County Land Use & Environmental Services



# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CODE ENFORCEMENT

On behalf of the staff at Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement, I am pleased to present our annual report for FY18. At Code Enforcement, we always stay focused on our mission – ensuring the safety of people who live, work and visit buildings in Mecklenburg County by ensuring those buildings comply with North Carolina Building Code.

At Code Enforcement, we call the people we serve, from homeowners to large major developers, our customers. This year, we have focused on our customers like never before, examining the way we provide services like plan review and inspections, and asking ourselves how we can make that experience better, more efficient, more satisfying for our customers. We're in the early stages of that planning now, having aligned and connected government agencies in our processes, but I'm excited about where we're headed, and I think you will be, too.

The changes don't stop there – last fiscal year saw the sunset of the rehab code, and the change to the newest version of the electrical code, with the other trades close behind. This is an adjustment for staff and customers alike, but we have put great effort into making sure that we educate our customers as we learn more and step through those changes together.

And speaking of focus on our customers, make sure you read about our latest class of Code Heroes. I look forward every year to the opportunity to salute a few of our customers who are going above and beyond, and we recognized three outstanding customers this year.

As you review this report, I hope you will join in my pride about where we've been, and my excitement about the road ahead.



Patrick G. Granson, MCP, CBO, LEED-AP  
Director, Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement

# BUILDING DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Building Development Commission is an advisory board that makes recommendations to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners and Code Enforcement staff on development-related ordinances, budget, service delivery, fees, division performance, and public opinion.

## FY2018 MEMBERS

**Jonathan Bahr**

Chair

Charlotte Chamber of Commerce

**Glenn Berry**

AIA Charlotte

**Benjamin Simpson**

American Society of Landscape  
Architects, North Carolina Chapter

**John Taylor**

Associated Builders & Contractors, Inc.

**Rodney Kiser**

Charlotte Area Association  
of Electrical Contractors

**Terry Knotts**

Charlotte Chamber of Commerce,  
Small Business Representative

**Scott Shelton\***

Charlotte Heating & Air  
Contractors Association

**Travis Haston**

Vice Chair

National Association  
of the Remodeling Industry

**Paul Stefano**

Charlotte Plumbing, Heating  
& Cooling Association

**Michael Stephenson**

Greater Charlotte Apartment Association

**Tom Brasse**

Home Builders Association  
of Greater Charlotte

**Andrew Kennedy**

Professional Engineers of N.C.  
Charlotte Chapter

**Melanie Coyne**

Public Representative

**Walter Kirkland\***

Public Representative

*\*Indicates that the representative did not serve the entire fiscal year.*



# FOCUS ON OUR MISSION

Mecklenburg County  
Code Enforcement  
saves lives  
and  
prevents injury  
by ensuring buildings in  
our community are safe  
and compliant with  
North Carolina  
Building Codes.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## RESPONDING IN TIMES OF CRISIS

In December 2017, Mecklenburg County's servers came under attack. Rather than give in to the demands of the perpetrators, County Manager Dena Diorio led county staff in working to restore our systems on our own, while still providing services to our community.

For Code Enforcement, which conducts almost all plan review and tracks all permits and inspections through our online customer portals, this was a daunting task. Our staff set up an ad hoc paper process for plan review and permitting and set up call centers to perform the inspections scheduling work normally done by our software. With the flexibility and understanding of our customers, we were able to continue to provide services until our systems were restored.

We have never been prouder to partner with the people of Mecklenburg County in building a safe and thriving community.



## BECOMING A HEAVY HITTER

Here at Code Enforcement, we talk a lot about buildings, but we don't typically spend a lot of time talking about **our** building. We were proud of the work we did to renovate our Suttle Avenue headquarters, and make a more pleasant, more efficient space for our customers, but this year, that work was honored with a



Charlotte Business Journal 2017 Heavy Hitters Commercial Real Estate Award for outstanding build-out project.

## A TIME FOR CHANGE

FY18 saw the beginning of a series of code changes in North Carolina — the electrical code changed and the rehab code sunsetted, ceding way to the N.C. Existing Building Code. As FY18 wrapped up, the building, plumbing and mechanical codes were about to change in the state for the first time in six years. Throughout these transitions, we focused on education and increased awareness for our customers.

## THANKING OUR HEROES

Every year, Code Enforcement takes the opportunity to select just a few of our many customers who dedicate themselves to code-compliant, sustainable building and development. Our 2018 Code Heroes are as follows:

- Little Diversified Architectural Consulting — for sustained commitment to pursuing code compliance in design decisions
- McCormick Custom Construction — for sustained commitment to code-compliant building and inspection readiness
- Meritage Homes: Mirabella Team — for commitment to inspection readiness and code compliance in the Mirabella communities



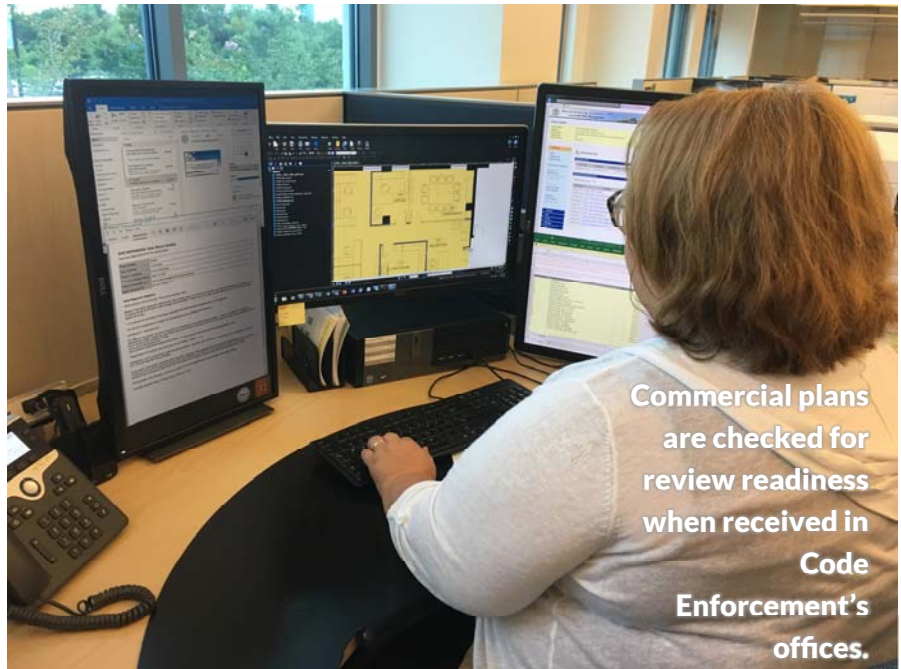
# FOCUS ON OUR WORK

Code Enforcement's core functions are permitting, plan review, and inspections. The majority of staff and resources are dedicated to those functions, along with support staff who manage the technological, administrative, and financial functions of the agency. Our processes are virtually paperless, and customers do most of their business through our online portals. Code Enforcement's mandate is to ensure life safety by requiring building code compliance. Here's how that happens in Mecklenburg County:

## PERMITTING & PLAN REVIEW

Under North Carolina law, most commercial and residential construction requires a permit. This includes all new construction, but could also include renovations,

repairs, demolitions, upfits, changeouts or upgrades. Our staff issued more than 101,000 permits in FY 2018 (see page 8 for details). These permits cover building, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing trades, and some special work. Usually, plan review is required in advance.



Commercial plans  
are checked for  
review readiness  
when received in  
Code  
Enforcement's  
offices.

Our plan review services center around the project's needs — residential, small commercial, large commercial, projects that utilize alternative delivery methods, and mega/multi-family projects.



# INSPECTIONS

Inspectors check work as it is being completed in the field to ensure that it conforms with approved drawings and meets all code requirements. Inspections has overhauled its services this year to focus around keeping the same inspectors throughout a project when possible, to foster stronger customer relationships. County staff completed nearly 325,000 inspections in FY 18 (see page 9 for more).

Inspections also houses the Mecklenburg County Fire Marshal's office, which performs

fire investigations and plan review for every part of Mecklenburg County outside the Charlotte city limits.



# FOCUS ON THE DETAILS:

FY18 Revenue	
Permit revenue	\$29,391,156
Other revenue	\$4,797,566
Total	\$34,188,722

FY17 Expenses	
Expenses	\$28,713,014
Encumbrances	\$96,556
Total	\$28,809,570

Note: Code Enforcement is entirely funded by user fees.

Plan Review & Permitting		
	FY17	FY18
Permits issued	96,723	101,035
OnSchedule (large commercial) plan review		
- Number of projects reviewed	2,744	3,417
- First review pass rate (all trades)	74.0%	82.1%
- Second review pass rate (all trades)	81.3%	87.5%
CTAC (small commercial) plan review		
- Number of projects reviewed	1,224	1,144
- First review pass rate	77.8%	72.0%

Notes: Most large commercial projects are reviewed in our OnSchedule plan review stream, and most small commercial projects are reviewed in our Commercial Technical Assistance Center (CTAC) plan review stream. Staff interpret increasing pass rates as an indicator of design professionals who are well-versed in the code, Code Enforcement staff who are being communicative with customers, and strong, collaborative relationships with our customers.

# PERFORMANCE DATA

Inspections		
	FY17	FY18
Inspections performed	312,778	324,619
Average inspection response time (days)		
- Building	1.35	1.32
- Electrical	1.44	1.36
- Mechanical	1.36	1.40
- Plumbing	1.38	1.26
- All trades	<b>1.38</b>	<b>1.33</b>
Inspection Pass Rate		
- Building	76.8%	75.8%
- Electrical	84.3%	84.2%
- Mechanical	86.8%	86.8%
- Plumbing	88.2%	89.5%
- All trades	<b>84.0%</b>	<b>84.1%</b>

Customer Service Center		
	FY17	FY18
Walk-ins assisted	15,453	13,347
Average wait time (goal: 85% in less than 15 mins.)	9 mins., 19 secs.	9 mins., 29 secs.
Phone calls taken	114,634	110,050

*Note: These numbers are for Code Enforcement customers only. These staff members also assist customers of other LUESA divisions.*





**MECKLENBURG COUNTY  
LAND USE & ENVIRONMENTAL  
SERVICES AGENCY  
CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION**

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**980-314-CODE**

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